

BOOK REVIEW

TRACEY PARKER. 2014. **Árboles Comunes de Nicaragua/Common Trees of Nicaragua**. (ISBN-13: 978-0-9718739-1-9, pbk). The Tree Press, Suite 650, #125, 3300 Bee Cave Road, Austin, Texas 78746, U.S.A. (**Orders:** www.thetreepress.com, 1-800-247-6553). \$44.95, 404 pp., 170+ line drawings, 1200+ color photos, map, glossary, index, 6" × 9". Fully bilingual text (Spanish and English).

A fully bilingual guide to the trees and tree-like plants of Nicaragua, this book is packed to the gills with information. Each species is presented over two pages: one for Spanish and English descriptions and one for color photographs. Each description page includes family name, Spanish and English common names, distribution, morphological description, habitat, ethnobotanical or commercial uses, and notes (a section for interesting facts and phenology). In addition, every description page also includes a line drawing and, where appropriate, taxonomic synonyms. The photo page accompanying each species includes anywhere from 5 to 10 color photographs of leaves, fruits, flowers, seeds, bark, habitat, and depiction of usage (e.g., a woman at a market balancing a tray of mango slices on her head).

Organized alphabetically by family, genus, and species (with monocots, dicots, and gymnosperms intermixed), the book also includes an index of both scientific and common names as well as an English and Spanish glossary of botanical terms, making it more novice-friendly. The front matter, however, is bare bones—just a map of Nicaragua and a brief introductory note from the author. Truly, this book is all about the trees, devoting the majority of its 400+-page heft to those wonderfully concise descriptions that manage to clearly depict the essentials of each species and do so in two languages. Personally, I admire the commitment to full dual-language text; by doing so, the author must have had to sacrifice some content, but the resulting text is not only streamlined and elegant but also accessible to a much wider audience.

Though I cannot speak to the quality of the taxonomic presentation, I believe *Common Trees of Nicaragua* to be a well-executed work relevant to the field guide genre. The inclusion of so many color photographs as well as the line drawings really give this book an edge over other field guides, though I would have liked to see the line drawings expanded in size where page content allowed. (Some description pages are completely filled while others have some usable white space remaining. ... Why not use that space to increase figure size?) Other than this, however, the layout is clean and consistent, the organization logical, pleasing, and easy to navigate. Dr. Parker also published *Trees of Guatemala* in 2008, and if it is anything like her current work, I will most assuredly be making a second purchase.—Brooke Byerley Best, PhD, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, Fort Worth, Texas, U.S.A.

From the publisher: TRACEY PARKER, PhD, forest ecologist, environmental consultant, professor and photographer, holds a bachelor's degree in forestry from Colorado State University, and masters and doctorate from the University of Idaho. Dr. Parker moved with her family from Nepal to Guatemala in 1994, and began teaching dendrology in the Forestry Department at the Universidad del Valle. She held the position of Regional Environmental Advisor at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) where her work took her to all the countries of Central America, expanding her knowledge of the vegetation throughout the isthmus.